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Around the Dials

Carson to Open Entire Show to Garrison

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JIM GARRISON, controversial New Orleans District Attorney, has accepted an invitation from Johnny Carson to appear on his show tomorrow (Wednesday) night.

The Tonight Show host says he plans to devote the entire 90 minutes to examine Garrison's charges that the real story of the Kennedy assassination has not been told.

He is rounding up what he considers to be a group of experts, both pro and anti-Garrison, to question the controversial law official.

Carson cancelled all entertainment guests who were scheduled to appear on the Wednesday show except for one singer. The lighthearted host, who has always preferred chit-chat and trivia to controversy, is breaking a precedent.

His invitation to Garrison developed from a lengthy conversation Carson got drawn into with Mort Sahl on the Jan. 24 show. Sahl is keenly interested in the Kennedy assassination and says he believes Garrison's charges have not been answered. He told Carson that he has voluntarily been helping Garrison question witnesses and other research.

NBC has released a 15-page transcript of the Sahl-Carson conversation. Carson displays an increasing interest in details as Sahl appraises the Warren Report and tries to answer countercharges against Garrison.

Sahl told Carson that Lee Harvey Oswald did not fire the fatal shots, but that Oswald was a "patsy" and was involved.

"You'll be finding that out soon. You don't have to take a comedian's word for it."

An unidentified male guest asked: "It is the official NBC News policy that this fellow Garrison is a fink, isn't it?"

[NBC in June, 1967, aired a documentary saying that two principal witnesses in Garrison's case against Clay L. Shaw had previously failed lie detector tests. Garrison wrote to the FCC saying NBC was "interfering" with his investigation.]

Carson told Sahl he did not know what the NBC News policy was, if indeed there was one. But he said "if NBC will clear Mr. Garrison, I'd be happy to invite him on the show." The transcript reads here ("Applause").

Sahl: "Good idea, John. Good man."

Carson: "If Mr. Garrison will also be subject to other people asking him questions so we can establish fact rather than just supposition and theory, because you can . . . you can theorize yourself to death, by reading those books . . ."

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